

**TOWN OF WAITSFIELD, VERMONT**  
**Planning Commission Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, May 7, 2024**

**Members Present:** Beth Cook, Bob Cook, Emma Hanson, AnnMarie Harmon, Alice Peal, Jonathan Ursprung

**Staff Present:** JB Weir, Planning and Zoning Administrator

**Others Present:** Becca Newhall

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 pm by Jonathan. The meeting was held in person at the Town Offices and remotely via Zoom.

**2. Review agenda for addition, removal, or adjustment of any items.**

No adjustments were made to the agenda.

**3. Public Forum.**

Nobody present requested time to address the Commission. Becca joined part of the meeting as a person potentially interested in joining the PC.

**4. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of April 16, 2024 were approved.

**5. Regional information updates**

Regional Plan – Alice reported that the extension request for completion of the Regional Plan update was granted, and that work has begun on the new iteration. There will be a Climate Action chapter added, and population information will be included in an Appendix.

Climate Action Plan – Alice will be working with the rural resource and resilience group; several presentations are planned which will provide background information for those drafting the Plan.

River Corridor regulations – Alice and Brian Voigt will be presenting at the next PC meeting regarding what needs to be incorporated to update Waitsfield’s Fluvial Erosion regulations; the RPC has grant money to help towns draft River Corridor language; adopting such plans, along with having a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan in place, will provide the most beneficial ERAF (Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund) rates for the Town.

Local Hazard Mitigation Plan – Alice indicated that this work is wrapping up, and public hearing for the Plan is scheduled for the next PC meeting.

Home Act – Alice reported that new requirements are working their way through the Legislature. There has been some discussion regarding the potential for allowance for too much density through recent bylaw changes around the state.

**6. Village Master Planning**

AnnMarie explained that the Steering Committee had spent some time discussing the strengths and weaknesses of each of the three consulting firm candidates; there was agreement that SE Group would be the most proficient for the Master Planning work, but some hesitation was expressed regarding their

newly-hired wetlands expert, whom it was felt does not have a broad experience base. The Committee has recommended that SE Group be engaged as the consultant, despite the reservations expressed regarding their strength in the associated wetlands planning work.

Alice noted that the Arrowwood work from three years ago speaks to the need for delineating wetlands; she also indicated that DEC is working on wetlands delineation in the region, and that some of the necessary work will be completed through that effort. Some PC members expressed that the underlying wetlands work should precede the actual planning work, although it was agreed that SE Group has provided excellent consulting previously, and has the background knowledge regarding Irasville to enable moving forward quickly with the planning work.

There was discussion regarding the potential to focus primarily on the master planning portion of this effort during the work to be performed under the grant which has been received, with the intent to follow through with a second phase which would primarily focus on the wetlands work. ACCD has indicated that a follow-up grant is possible through the Municipal Planning Grant (MPG) Program for larger projects such as this. The initial phase will include consideration of limitations imposed by general wetlands understanding, and may also include some planning for stormwater infrastructure.

It was agreed that the initial scope of this work and the deliverables associated with the current grant award will need to be modified slightly, with less focus placed on wetlands delineation and enhancement work. It was noted that this initial work will likely be more conceptual, and that it will be necessary to do further work, potentially through a follow-up MPG, to complete more detailed planning.

**MOTION:** AnnMarie made a motion to recommend to the Selectboard that SE Group be approved as the chosen consultant for the Village Master Planning Project, and to enter into a contract with SE Group pursuant to the guidelines set forth in the associated Municipal Planning Grant. The motion was seconded by Beth, and passed with Bob and Alice abstaining.

## **7. Wastewater Planning Project Update**

Updates were provided:

- The video has been completed and will be presented at tomorrow's informational meeting.
- Bond vote ballots will be mailed to all voters.
- The group is waiting for a response from Becca Balint's office regarding a grant application.
- It has been decided to proceed with an SBR system, which is a simpler system to have in place, and will be able to handle the household and restaurant waste generated with less chemical treatment.

## **8. 2024 Work Plan Discussion**

JB confirmed that he had added Town Plan work as discussed at last meeting.

## **9. Other Business**

PC Vacancy – JB noted that Becca plans to attend the next PC meeting as well, and that he had posted the vacancy on Front Porch Forum.

## **10. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary